



STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE
COMMUNITY AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Office of Economic Development

Sean Parnell, Governor
Emil Notti, Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of Economic Development announces new director

March 17, 2010, Anchorage, Alaska – The state Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development announced today that Wanetta Ayers has been hired as the new director of the Office of Economic Development.

Ayers has a long history of involvement in tourism, fisheries and economic and community development work around Alaska. She most recently served as executive director of the Western Alaska Community Development Association, a nonprofit trade organization that serves as the Western Alaska Community Development Quota program administrative panel. She brings 27 years of management experience to the position, and has worked extensively with elected officials, governing boards and senior management to implement public policy and programs designed to stimulate economic activity, create jobs and improve the quality of life in urban and rural communities.

“We are thrilled to have someone of Ms. Ayers’ talents and experience joining the effort at OED,” said Curtis Thayer, deputy commissioner of the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. “She will be a key member of the new team we’re putting together to tackle economic development issues around the state.”

Prior to her work with the Western Alaska Community Development Association, Ayers served as executive director of the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference. Before that, she held business development positions with the Kenai Peninsula Borough and Afognak Native Corporation. She has a master’s degree in business administration.

“I am passionate about Alaska and working to ensure a stable and prosperous future here,” Ayers said. “I look forward to my new role with the Office of Economic Development. We are at a critical juncture in our history as a state. I am excited to be a part of finding solutions to the challenges we face and exploring new opportunities.”

As director of the Office of Economic Development, Ayers will oversee development efforts for the tourism, timber, film, small business, fisheries and minerals sectors. She begins work with OED on March 19.

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